HIGH END SKIN RETOUCHING

SHARK PIXEL

Master the Art of Magazine-Quality Skin Retouching: The Fundamentals

Customizing Workspace 3

How Skin Reacts to Light 4

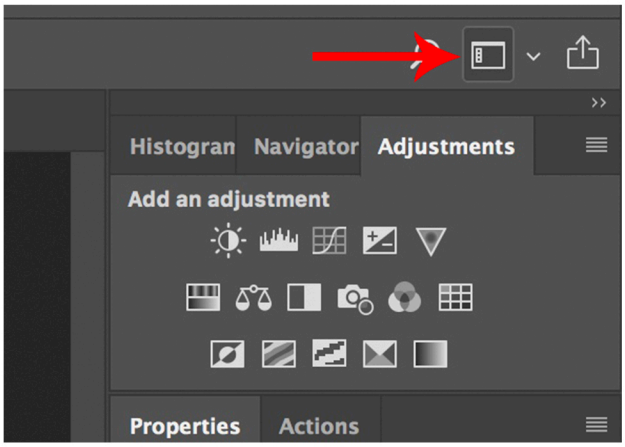
Blemishes 5

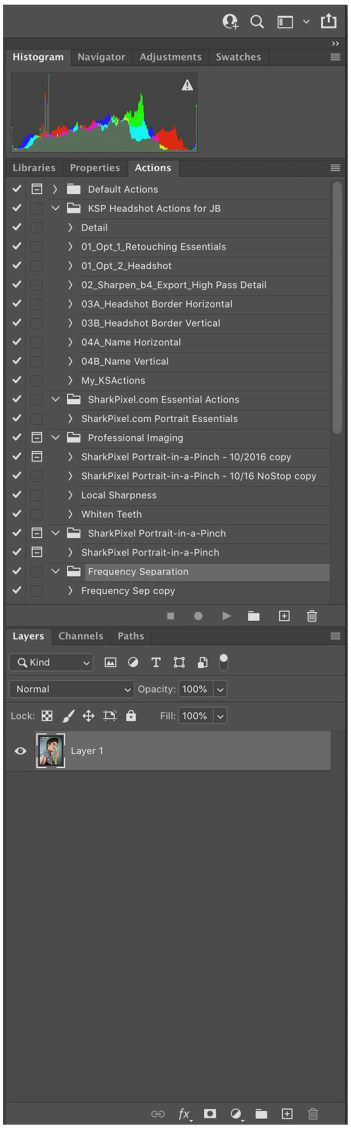
Skin Smoothing 7

Customizing Workspace

Organizing your workspace helps you work faster and more efficiently.

- Click on the Workspace drop-down menu in top right corner
- Select Photography Workspace
- Open Following Windows (a check mark next to the word means it will be visible):
  - ~ Window > Actions
  - ~ Window > Adjustments
  - ~ Window > Properties
  - ~ Window > Swatches
- Close history, info, and clone source windows





Group similarly sized windows together in the panel on the right to keep them organized:

- Drag the window over to the panel
- When the window has a blue box around it, you can drop it and it will nest within the other windows
- Move adjustments and swatches window up to the top of the panel with the histogram
- Drag color window out and close
- Drag properties and actions to the middle section with libraries

How Skin Reacts to Light

The act of retouching skin is to fix impurities on a client's face that may distract the viewer from their features (i.e. eyes, nose, mouth)

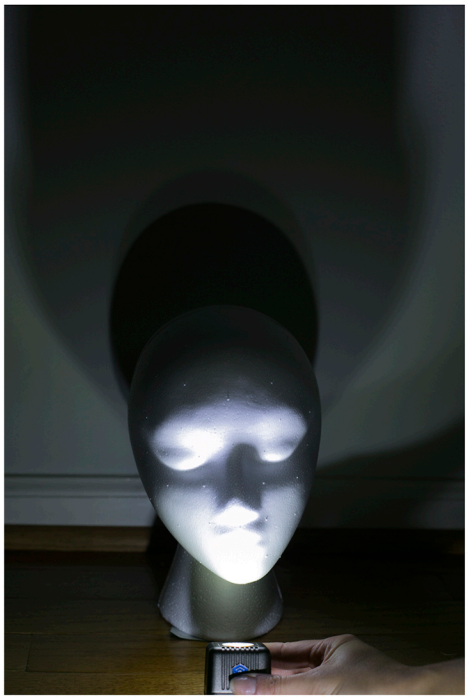
a. What is ideal lighting for skin?
   - Soft (less imperfections show)
   - Butterfly lighting

b. What causes skin to photograph poorly?
   - Harsh lighting
   - Contrasty situations

Photoshop can help you mitigate imperfect lighting to create the illusion of skin with less distracting elements.

Harsh Overhead Lighting

Diffused Overhead Lighting

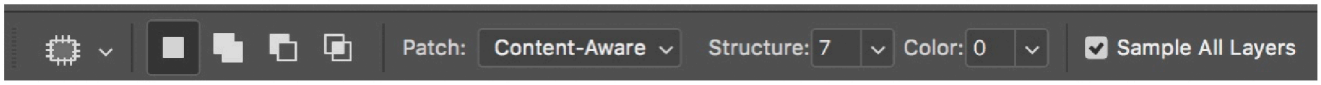


Under/Villainous Lighting

Blemishes

Batch Blemish Removal

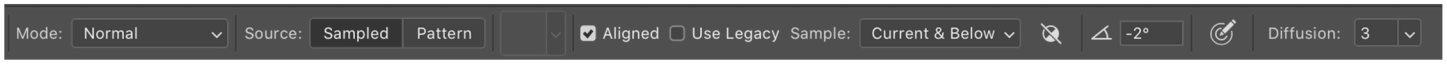
- Create Folder “Blemishes”
- Create New Empty Layer; name “Blemishes”
- Patch Tool
    1. Inside the healing brush fly out menu
    2. Set to content aware
    3. Structure = 7, Color = 0
    4. Check sample all layers



    5. Circle a blemish, hold down shift key and continue to select more blemishes
    6. Hover mouse over one selection; click and drag until you find a direction that looks good for most of the points.

Healing Brush tool

- New Photoshop CC 2015 Healing Brush added Live Preview as you worked, but it made the final healed area look very blurry. 2015.1 added diffusion slider.
- When we use a tool to remove a blemish, we want it to erase the blemish but ALSO blend in the new skin color and texture with the surrounding areas so it looks like there was nothing there in the first place. When retouching skin, a low diffusion (1-3) works better than a high diffusion (4-7).



- This tool is smart, but needs help from you
- Give this tool information that helps it make the right decision. If you’re healing a stray hair that is perpendicular to the hair line, make sure you sample an area that shows this tool what you want the ‘fix’ to look like
- Aligned check box will lock the proximity between your sample area and your area that needs fixing. Uncheck this box to fix multiple skin spots with the same reference area.
- Sample: Current and Below: Do your blemish healing on an empty layer. It keeps the file size down. By sampling current layer and below, it allows you to heal blemishes on an empty layer

Spot Healing Brush Tool

- Type: Content-Aware
- When using this tool on hair, extend healing section ¼ inch past the ending point, you think. Extend past general hairline. This helps the algorithm make a better guess at what you want; it also helps avoid bleed.
- To heal on an empty layer, make sure Sample All Layers is checked

Clone stamp tool

- Generally use at 20-30% opacity, or 100% opacity with a very small brush size, depending on how in focus the image is
- Keyboard number keys quickly change tool opacity: 2 = 20% opacity, 7 = 70% opacity
- Shift + Keyboard number keys quickly change tool flow: Shift + 2 = 20% flow, Shift + 7 = 70% flow
- Consider lighting variations when cloning, so it keeps with the shape of the face/image
- Good to diminish the look of fine lines/wrinkles that you don't want to completely erase
- Fade your most recent stroke: (Shift+Command/Control+F) allows you to fade the last brush stroke

Skin Smoothing:

Frequency Separation *AUTOMATIC* Method –
NOT ORIGINAL FREQUENCY SEPARATION – My tweaked version

- Separates the color and tone of the skin from the texture
- New Group: Skin Smoothing
- Select highest most layer in layers pallet
- Shift+Option+Command+E (Shift+Alt+Control+E) to merge all visible layers into one
- Then duplicate that merged layer (Command/Control+J)
- Rename the BOTTOM of the two new merged layers “Skin Blur” and move into skin smoothing folder
- Rename the TOP of the two new merged layers “Texture” and move into skin smoothing folder, make sure it continues to sit above the skin blur layer
- Turn off visibility of texture layer
- Select Skin Blur layer
- Filter > Blur > Surface Blur
    1. Option 1: Radius > 34, Threshold > 9
    2. Option 2: Option: Smart Filter - If you want the amount of blur to be editable in the future, convert your skin blur layer to a smart object before applying the surface blur (I don’t do this, though). Then right click empty portion of skin blur layer and choose convert to smart object
    3. Turn visibility of texture layer back on and select layer
    4. Filter > Other> High Pass
        ~ Look for radius that isolates the detail within the pore structure of the skin; this will be different depending on how large your file is. For this image I chose a radius of 3.5

5. Desaturate Layer – (Command/Control + U)
6. Change layer blend mode to overlay
7. Duplicate Texture layer, rename layer Texture 2
8. Create mask on Texture 2 layer
9. Edit > Fill > Fill (the mask) with 50% grey
   Basically like dragging opacity of the layer down to 50%, but you can use your brush tool and paint white on areas that need more texture and paint black on areas that need less texture
10. Put mask over the whole layer group (skin smoothing) and paint with white on skin areas to reveal the effect

Now lets see what magic you can work with your imagery

SHARK
PIXEL

sharkpixel.com/store